USA Domestic Policies 1953-73

**I. Eisenhower (1953-61)**

A. 'Modern Republicanism'

1. Internal dispute over size of Govt

2. Old Guard (tax cuts) vs Ike (social welfare but maintain free market eco

3. "Lead the country down the middle of the road"

B. Wealth & Poverty

1. Economic boom t/f wealth creation

2. Personal wealth inc by 45%

3. Unemply low

4. Inflation 2%

5. By end of 50s, 1/5 in poverty

6. WELFARE POLICIES

a. Expanded Social Security

increased minimum wage

created Dept Health

Dept Ed

Dept Welfare

supported public low income housing

C. Economy

1. Infrastructure spending

a. created jobs

b. Interstate Highway Program

D. McCarthyism

1. 'Reds under the beds' - Communist witchhunts

a. McC created paranoia

b. Accused Communist sympathisers within State Dept, Hollywood,

c. Televised hearings of Comm influence within Army

d. Suggested ambassadors disloyal

e. Censored by Senate 1954

2. Eisenhower didn't like, didn't like criticism of his staff

a. 'I won't get in a pissing contest with that scum'

b. (But perhaps if he did, McC influence less and shorter time)

c. McC politically useful because started as attacks agst Truman admin (helped Eis to WH)

d. Once Pres, Eis under scrutiny, t/f tries to control McC more

E. Civil Rights - overall 'tepid supporter'

1. Brown vs Board of Ed

a. racial segregation unconstitutional

b. Eis refuse to endorse

c. 1957 Little Rock Nine - Fed resp to uphold law -> Nat Guard. Following year, no action despite closure of schools to prevent integration

d. 1960 only 6% of Afr-Am attended integrated schools

2. 1957 Civil Rights Act - voting rights

a. 1960 Civil Rights Act - small advances

**II. Kennedy (1961-63)**

a) Recession  
-1961, Kennedy is elected into recession, 5.5 million Americans are U/E, farm incomes down 25%  
-Govt embarked on a program of lowering taxes, protecting unemployed, raising min wage. Military spending due to Cold War helped. Economy “fine-tuned” with fiscal/monetary policy  
-1962: recession over

b) Civil Rights: top of the agenda in the Kennedy Era  
-Civil rights movement gained momentum. Freedom rides, MLK Jnr speeches and new CRM groups (Black Panthers) increased pressure on Kennedy.  
-Kennedy forced to appoint Democrat judges: most of them intolerant of desegregation. Never was a problem for Ike, who appointed Republican moderates.  
-Sept, 1962. African American Air Force vet James Meredith prevented from entering Uni of Mississippi by Governor. Kennedy and brother Robert federalize the National guard and escorted Meredith in. Violent riot ensued, two died in the struggle.  
-MLK Jnr’s “I have a Dream” 1962 Speech made in Washington to ¼ million people. Further emphasised CRM’s importance.  
-Kennedy delayed civil rights bill until 2nd term, thought laws in his 1st term would undermine his civil rights program. Focused on enforcing laws made during Ike era rather than creating new laws, thus his impact on CRM = debatable even though well-intentioned. Activists saw his efforts as “gradualist”, demanded immediate action.  
-Post-grassy knoll, Civil rights bill passed.

c) Other Domestic Policy  
-Bills to cut taxes, broaden civil rights obstructed by Congress.   
-Proposal for Dept of Urban Affairs shot down by southern Dems scared that the Sec. of State would be black.  
-Development projects in Appalachia (south basically) helped decrease poverty, effects felt for following 3 decades.

**III. Johnson (1963-69)**

A. Inequality in Education

1. More money provided to colleges

2. Particular students chosen for funding

a. Sparked racial tension due to opposition of liberation of rights

B. Slum and Urban Area issues

1. Creating of Department of Housing and Urban Development

a. Slum clearance

b. Public housing programs

c. Higher standard of living, less under poverty line

C. The Elderly

1. Vast amount unable to afford Healthcare

2. Made up large portion of those under poverty line

3. Medicare introduced

a. Federal funding of healthcare for senior citizens

b. Higher standard of living

c. Equality between generations

D. War on Poverty

1. Number under poverty line had increased during Kennedy years

2. “Community Action Agency” created (CAA) 1964

a. Coordination of programs design to help the poor

b. "Maximum feasible participation" from residents

c. Increased spending

d. Social, mental, health, employment services

e. Job opportunities

3. Anxiety amongst communities over control of CAA

a. Community activist upset over lack of control

b. Congress eventually allowed local governments to take over

c. 8% decrease of people under poverty line in 1964-74

E. Racial Tension and Segregation

1. Kennedy’s Civil Rights Act passed in 1964

2. Voting Rights Act, 1965

a. Suspension of ‘intelligence tests’ which were rigged against blacks

b. Suspension of ‘good character’ tests

c. Suspension of ‘poll tax’ which discriminated against blacks

3. Black votes up 300% 1965-69

4. Increased racial tension due to opposition towards black liberation

**President Nixon (Republican) 1969 – 1974**

*Domestic affairs*

1969 – 1971: High inflation and high unemployment – ‘stagflation’  
-Nixon adopted a policy of monetary restraint (raise interest rates)  
-‘Gradualism’ – hoped to restrict the growth of the money supply  
-Delayed federal pay rises

1971: New Economic Policy (NEP) – wage-and-price freeze, tax cuts, temporary closure of the ‘gold window’ (preventing other nations from demanding American gold in exchange for American dollars), 10% import tax.  
-NEP was very popular

Late 1971: Economic boom and lasted into 1972.

1972: Nixon reelection.

1973: Shortage of food, inflation and the oil shock  
-Oil embargo due to Arab states boycott  
-Inflation, rising unemployment, recession, crashing stock market

*Regulating and Social Legislation*

1970: Rising concern about the environment  
-Nixon proposed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Nixon increased Social Security and Medicare benefits  
-Nixon proposed more ambitious programs than he enacted

*Watergate*

-Abuse of presidential power; administration misdeeds; string of illegal conduct  
-Nixon unconstitutionally created his own secret police organization (Special Investigations Unit, also known as ‘The Plumbers’) to unearth a conspiracy that he feared would leak some of his most damaging foreign policy secrets.  
-Nixon was concerned about the publication of the Pentagon papers – a massive study of the Vietnam War as Nixon’s predecessors conducted it, but not about the Nixon administration.  
-Nixon was paranoid that his politically damaging secrets would be exposed before the 1972 election; he suspected a conspiracy, and resolved to destroy it before it destroyed him.  
-Led to the Watergate break in where two members of The Plumbers, ex CIA agent Hunt and ex-FBI agent Liddy arranged for Cuban expatriates to burglarize the Daniel Ellsberg’s (the man who leaked the Pentagon Papers) psychiatrist’s office to look for damaging information on the former Pentagon aide and military operative.   
-Cuban expatriates were arrested and it was discovered that Hunt and Liddy were behind the Watergate break-in as well. Nixon tried to cover up this.  
-The cover up was just as damaging as the crime itself.  
-Nixon’s White House taping system was revealed.

1974: Nixon resigned.